

Message Text

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R 010957Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7245

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

13TH AIR FORCE/IN CLARK AB

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 BANGKOK 15768

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: STUDENT CONFRONTATION WITH THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OVER THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EVENT

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A) BANGKOK 15107; B) BANGKOK 15190; C) BANGKOK 15209;
D) BANGKOK 15282; E) BANGKOK 15342; F) BANGKOK 15522

SUMMARY:

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NON-STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVISTS USING STUDENTS AS A

FRONT FOR THEIR DEMONSTRATIONS ON 18-21 SEPTEMBER 1974
THREW THE MOVEMENT TOWARD CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT
INFO SERIOUS CONFUSION. A NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF
THAILAND (NSCT) "SPONSORED" 4-DAY DEMONSTRATION, WHICH
WAS ACTUALLY TAKEN OVER BY THE PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY GROUP
(PDG), DEVELOPED INTO A MAJOR CONFRONTATION BETWEEN NON-
STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, UNIVERSITY STUDENT ALLIES AND
THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA). THE SITUATION
REACHED CRISIS PROPORTIONS, HOWEVER, ONLY AFTER IT WAS RE-
PORTED THAT PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK AND SPEAKER OF
THE NLA KHUKRIT PRAMOT IMPLIED THEY WOULD SUPPORT NLA RE-
JECTION OF THE CURRENT DRAFT CONSTITUTION AT ITS THIRD
READING ON OCTOBER 5, AND WOULD SUBMIT A NEW DRAFT
EMBODYING SOME OF THE STUDENTS' DEMANDS. THIS WAS PERCEIVED
BY NEARLY ALL AS CAPITULATION TO STUDENTS WHOSE STRENGTH
HAD BEEN MISJUDGED. KHUKRIT NOW CLAIMS HE DID NOT
AGREE TO SUCH MANEUVER.

TO THE SURPRISE OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, THE NATIONAL
VOCATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NVSC) STAGED A LARGE
COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION ON SEPTEMBER 23 AGAINST PDG/NSCT PRESSURE
TACTICS AGAINST THE NLA AND DECLARED VOCATIONAL STUDENT
SUPPORT FOR THE NLA. THE SITUATION HAS CALMED CONSIDERABLY
AND THE ODDS ARE THAT THE NLA WILL PASS THE DRAFT CONSTI-
TUTION IN ITS PRESENT FORM. WHETHER LIBERAL ELEMENTS CAN
MUSTER ENOUGH SUPPORT BETWEEN OCTOBER 8, 1974 AND THE
SCHEDULED FEBRUARY 1, 1975 ELECTIONS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION
IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOME OF THE STUDENTS' DEMANDS REMAINS TO
BE SEEN.

THIS TELEGRAM, BASED ON THE SITUATIONS DESCRIBED IN THE SIX
REFERENCES, SEEKS TO IDENTIFY THE KEY ACTORS AND ANALYZE THEIR
MOTIVES. WE DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS CONFRONTATION
FOR THE FUTURE IN A FOLLOWING CABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE KEY ACTORS. THE KEY ACTORS AND CONTENDING FORCES
IN THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN STUDENT POWER AND THE
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ARE:

A) THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) - THE
NSCT IS CURRENTLY UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF A TEMPORARY
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SECRETARY GENERAL, CHANGTHONG OPATSIRIVIT. WHILE THE
DEMONSTRATION CARRIED THE NSCT BANNER, IT APPEARS THAT THE
NSCT ITSELF WAS OUTMANEUVERED OR MANIPULATED FROM THE START
BY THIRAYUT BUNMI AND THE PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY GROUP (PDG).
THE NSCT HAS IN EFFECT BEEN USED BY THE PDG AS A FRONT FOR THE
PURPOSES OF THE MORE ACTIVIST AMONG THAILAND'S YOUNG
POLITICIANS. THOUGH IT SUPPORTS THE FOUR DEMANDS, THE
NSCT MAY NOT HAVE INTENDED THE RALLY TO DEVELOP INTO A

FULL SCALE DEMONSTRATION AND CONFRONTATION WITH THE NLA.
B) THIRAYUT BUNMI LEADER OF THE PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY GROUP (PDG). THIRAYUT IS A FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NSCT. HE WAS A PRIME LEADER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN 1972-73. THIRAYUT WAS THE MOST OUTSPOKEN OF ALL THE RALLY SPEAKERS AND CERTAINLY ONE OF THOSE MOST OFTEN GIVEN TO THREATENING VIOLENCE IF THE "STUDENT" DEMANDS WERE NOT MET. THIRAYUT BUNMI AND THE PDG WERE AND ARE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE NSCT-NLA CONFRONTATION.

C) PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK. THE PRIME MINISTER IS THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE. SANYA OVERESTIMATED THE STRENGTH OF THE PDG-NSCT PROTEST (OR WAS UNDULY INFLUENCED BY FEARS THAT VIOLENCE WAS IMMINENT) WHEN ON 21 SEPTEMBER HE MET WITH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES AND GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE NOT ONLY SUPPORTED THE STUDENTS' OBJECTIVES BUT THAT HE AND NLA SPEAKER KHUKRIT PRAMOT EXPECTED AND, INDEED, HOPED THAT THE CONSTITUTION WOULD FAIL, WHEREUPON THEY WOULD SUBMIT A NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION TO THE NLA. SANYA ON 23 SEPTEMBER MET WITH THE KING TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. HE HAS NOT YET REVEALED THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING. INFLUENCED PERHAPS BY THE NVSCT COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION SUPPORTING THE NLA AND REJECTION OF HIS PROPOSED ACTION BY LARGE NUMBERS OF NLA MEMBERS, SANYA HAS BEGUN TO RETREAT FROM WHAT APPEARED TO BE HIS PREVIOUS POSITION. HE ADMITTED THAT HIS ORIGINAL STATEMENTS MAY HAVE BEEN VAGUE AND WERE THEREFORE MISINTERPRETED. HE NOW SAYS THE MATTER IS ENTIRELY UP TO THE NLA, WHICH HE WILL NOT TRY TO INFLUENCE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

D) NLA SPEAKER KHUKRIT PRAMOT. KHUKRIT'S POSITION AND ACTIVITY DURING THE THREE DAY DEMONSTRATION HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CONFUSING. EARLY ON HE RECOMMENDED THAT THE STUDENTS TAKE THEIR CASE TO THE KING. HE INITIALLY MADE NO
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ATTEMPT TO DEFEND THE INTEGRITY OF THE NLA OF WHICH HE IS SPEAKER. AFTER A WEEK OF CONSPICUOUS SILENCE DURING WHICH ALL ASSUMED THAT HE AND SANYA HAD AGREED AT THEIR SEPTEMBER 21 MEETING TO INTRODUCE A NEW CONSTITUTION INCLUDING STUDENT DEMANDS SHOULD THE CURRENT DRAFT FAIL, KHUKRIT DENIED PUBLICLY HAVING MADE SUCH A DEAL. FURTHERMORE, HE CRITICIZED SANYA FOR REVEALING HIS OWN VIEWS AND PLAN BEFORE THE NLA HAD A CHANCE TO ACT. KHUKRIT NOW SAYS HE WILL NEVER AGAIN MEET PRIVATELY WITH PRIME MINISTER SANYA AS HE DID ON SEPTEMBER 20 AT SANYA'S REQUEST. HE AT FIRST ALSO PROTESTED CRITICISM OF HIM BY STUDENTS AS UNFAIR, SINCE HE WAS AN ORIGINAL PROMOTER OF THE 18 YEAR OLD VOTING AGE, BUT THEN REVERSED HIMSELF TO SAY PUBLIC FIGURES HAD TO EXPECT CRITICISM.

E) THE NLA. THE ASSEMBLY AS A WHOLE REJECTED ALL LAST DITCH

EFFORTS ON SEPTEMBER 20 BY THE LIBERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS TO GAIN RECONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES THE STUDENTS RAISED. THE APPARENT CAPITULATION BY SANYA AND KHUKRIT CAUGHT MOST ASSEMBLYMEN BY SURPRISE AND PRODUCED ADVERSE REACTIONS AMONG EVEN THOSE MEMBERS WHO SUPPORT THE STUDENT OBJECTIVES. THE NLA IS SPLIT TO SOME DEGREE BETWEEN THE LIBERAL AND MODERATE TO CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS. THE FORMER HAVE LONG BEEN FRUSTRATED BY THE INEVITABLE FAILURE OF THEIR BILLS AT THE HANDS OF THE MAJORITY. THE VOTE ON THE CRAFT CONSTITUTION ON OCT.

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5 MAY NOT BE STRONGLY CONTESTED BY THE LIBERALS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE MANY OF THEM ALSO WANT THE CONSTITUTION TO PASS. DR. PUAI, THE MOST PROMINENT LEADER OF THE LIBERALS, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL VOTE FOR PASSAGE. THE LIBERALS WILL, HOWEVER, PROBABLY TRY HARD TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION

BETWEEN OCT. 8, 1974 AND FEB. 1, 1975. AT THIS WRITING IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THEY WILL SUCCEED ON ALL POINTS DEMANDED BY THE STUDENTS, THOUGH THE LOWER VOTING AGE PROBABLY HAS THE BEST CHANCE OF PASSAGE.

F) THE NATIONAL VOCATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NVSC). THE NVSC WAS AN APPARENT SUPPORTER OF THE PDG-NSCT DEMONSTRATION ON THE FIRST TWO DAYS, 18-19 SEPT. THE BREAK AWAY BY VOCATIONAL STUDENTS BEGAN ON FRIDAY 20 SEPT. WHEN PINIT CHINDASILIP, LEADER OF THE FEDERATION OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS
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RIGHTS CENTER (FVSR) LED A RALLY OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE PHRAMAINE GROUNDS AND ATTACKED THE NSCT AND THIRAYUT AND SEKSAN AS TROUBLE MAKERS WHO USED THE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FOR THEIR OWN ENDS. THE NVSC DID NOT, HOWEVER, TAKE A FORMAL POSITION AGAINST THE NSCT DEMONSTRATION UNTIL SEPT. 22. A LARGE DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE NLA BY ABOUT 7,000 VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ON SEPT. 23 EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE NLA AND SERVED AS A WARNING TO THE UNIVERSITY-LEVEL STUDENTS AGAINST PERPETRATING VIOLENCE OR PRESSURE ON THE (#)

THIS POSITION AT A NATIONAL LEVEL MEETING OF OVER 200 UNIVERSITY, SECONDARY SCHOOL AND VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY HELD ON 29-EP SEPTEMBER 1974 AT KASETSAT UNIVERSITY. THE NSCT CALLED THE MEETING IN AN EFFORT TO RECONSIDER STUDENT DIFFERENCES AND TO DISCUSS APPROACHED SHOULD THE NLA PASS THE CONSTITUTION ON OCT. 5 WITHOUT AMENDING IT. THE NVSC IS A PARTICIPANT IN THIS MEETING BUT IS APPARENTLY TRYING TO MAINTAIN AN INDEPENDENT POSITION, PARTICULARLY AS AN OPPONENT OF MASSIVE VIOLENCE PRONE DEMONSTRATIONS OR OTHER SUCH PRESSURE TACTICS ON THE NLA. THE NVSC ITSELF HAS IN SEVERAL SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS PLEDGED THAT ITS MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS WILL NOT THEMSELVES CARRY WEAPONS OR PERPETRATE VIOLENCE IN SUPPORT OF ITS OBJECTIVES.
G) THESE ARE THE MAJOR PUBLIC ACTORS IN CURRENT CRISIS. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, OTHER ACTORS AND FORCES BEHIND THE SCENES WHO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE SITUATION. FIRST AMONG THESE IS GENERAL KRIT SIWARA. HIS VIEWS ARE THAT THE STUDENTS CAN DEMONSTRATE AS THEY WISH SO LONG AS THERE IS NO VIOLENCE. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY HE WOULD BRING THE ARMY INTO THE ACT, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY ORDERED TO BY THE KING OR PRIME MINISTER SANYA, THOUGH MANY SOLDIERS ARE FULLY PREPARED TO MOVE AGAINST THE STUDENTS IF THIS BECOMES NECESSARY. A SECOND KEY ACTOR IS SEKSAN PRASOETKUN WHO HAS ACTUALLY BEEN CONSPICUOUS BY HIS ABSENCE SINCE THE FIRST DAY OF THE DEMONSTRATION. SO TOO HAS HIS MOST RECENT ASSOCIATE, LABOR LEADER THERDPHUM CHAIDI. THE ABSENCE OF THESE TWO INDIVIDUALS

SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENS THE PDG-NSCT ACTIVITIES AND FURTHER ISOLATES THEM.

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H) THE KING HAS NOT YET TAKEN A STAND, THOUGH HE PRESUMABLY GAVE PRIME MINISTER SANYA SOME ADVICE WHEN THE LATTER MET HIM ON SEPTEMBER 23. KHUKRIT TRIED TO BRING THE KING INTO THE FRAY BY SUGGESTING THE STUDENTS PETITION HIM AND BY DEFENDING THIS POSITION WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT THAI SHOULD USE THEIR KING. SO FAR, HOWEVER, KING PHAMIPHON IS WHERE HE WANTS TO BE -- OUT OF THE LIME-LIGHT. IN THE LONG RUN HIS NON-INVOLVEMENT MIGHT ENABLE A MORE CANDID DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES AND A MORE STABLE COMPROMISE OF THE CONFLICT.

2. MOTIVES OF THE KEY ACTORS.

A) THE NSCT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO ELECT A PERMANENT SECRETARY GENERAL (ALTHOUGH IT HAS TRIED TWICE) SINCE THE RESIGNATION OF MODERATE STUDENT LEADER SOMBAT THAMRONGTHANYAWONG ON 30 JUNE 1974. SUCH A SUCCESSION CRISIS SUGGESTS TO SOME OBSERVERS THAT THE NSCT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS UNABLE TO AGREE AMONG ITSELF OR DEFINE A CLEARER PURPOSE AND DIRECTION FOR NSCT SPONSORED POLITICAL ACTIVISM. OTHERS BELIEVE IT IS AN INDICATION THAT THE MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE NSCT ARE BEING PARTICULARLY CAREFUL ABOUT WHOME THEY SELECT AS THEIR LEADER. THE CURRENT NSCT LEADERSHIP MAY HAVE BEEN TRYING TO USE THE FOUR DEMANDS OF THE RECENT DEMONSTRATION AS A MEANS OF REASSERTING THE NSCT LEADERSHIP'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS OTHER STUDENT GROUPS, OF DEFINING A CLEAR PURPOSE AND DIRECTION FOR ITS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, AND OF RESTORING SOME SEMBLANCE OF STUDENT UNITY IN PREPARATION FOR THE 14 OCTOBER 1974 CEREMONIES. ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL CHANGTHONG OPATSIRIWIT SAID ON THE FIRST DAY THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE NSCT WAS "TO CREATE POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE PEOPLE ALTHOUGH WE HAVE SUCH AN INAPPROPRIATE CONSTITUTION." THE NSCT DID NOT EXPECT THE DEMONSTRATIONS TO BE MORE THAN A LARGE HYDE PARK RALLY OR LEAD TO THE TYPE OF CONFRONTATION THAT ACTUALLY DEVELOPED WITH THE NLA. THE MORE OUTSPOKEN SPEAKERS ON THE PHRAMAINE GROUNDS AND AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT WERE NOT NSCT LEADERS -- THEY WERE THIRAYUT BUNMI AND OTHER PDG ACTIVISTS WHO HAD OUTMANEUVERED THE NSCT WHILE USING ITS NAME AS THE SPONSORING FORCE.

B) THIRAYUT BUNMI AND THE PDG, IF THE NVSCT AND PINIT

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CHINDASALIP ARE TO BE BELIEVED, HAVE TRIED TO USE ATTACKS ON THE CONSTITUTION AND LEADING PERSONALITIES SUCH AS KHUKRIT AND KRIT AS A MEANS OF FURTHERING THEIR OWN POLITICAL POSITIONS AND CONNECTIONS. THE PDG SUPPORTS THE LOWER VOTING AGE AND CANDIDACY AGES IN ORDER TO APPEAL TO THE YOUNGER PEOPLE FROM WHOM IT WANTS TO DRAW SUPPORT. THE PDG "COORDINATES" WITH THE NSCT AND OTHER STUDENT GROUPS BECAUSE IT NEEDS LARGE CROWDS OF STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE POWER. THIRAYUT MAY BE SINCERE IN HIS COMMITMENT TO POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THAILAND THAT WILL BENEFIT THE THAI PEOPLE AS A WHOLE. IT MAY ALSO BE THAT HE IS ACTING FOR OTHER AS YET NOT CLEARLY IDENTIFIED POLITICAL GROUPS. WHATEVER THE CASE, HE KNOWS THAT HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN THE PDG ARE DISTINCT MINORITY WITH LITTLE POWER EXCEPT THAT WHICH THEY CAN MUSTER AND DEMONSTRATE AT LARGE RALLIES. THEIR IMPATIENCE WITH THE PACE OF CHANGE, UNWILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE AND NEED TO RETAIN THEIR INTEGRITY AS LEADERS MOTIVATE THEM TO TRY TO FORCE CHANGE BY THREATENING VIOLENCE. SUCH THREATS AND INTENTIONS ARE CREDIBLE ONLY IF THE PDG CAN ALLY WITH OTHERS, WHILE RETAINING DIRECTION OF THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THEIR PROTEST DEMANDS. THIRAYUT DISLIKES GENERAL KRIT SIWARA, GENERAL PRACHUAP SUNTHARANGKUN AND LT. GENERAL WITHUN YASAWAT. HIS FIERCE PUBLIC ATTACKS ON THESE MEN COULD BE A WAY TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM ANY SECRET COUNTERACTION HE BELIEVES

NOTE BY OC/T: BANGKOK 15768 (SEC 2 OF 3). (#)OMISSION IN PARA F. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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THEY MIGHT TAKE AGAINST HIM PERSONALLY. THIRAYUT'S ATTACKS ON KHUKRIT ARE HARDER TO EXPLAIN EXCEPT PERHAPS IN TERMS OF PERSONAL JEALOUSY (E.G., KHUKRIT HAS NEVER BEEN POPULAR WITH THE MORE OUTSPOKEN POLITICAL ACTIVISTS).

C) SANYA THAMMASAK DOES NOT WANT TO BE PRIME MINISTER. HE WANTS TO AVOID VIOLENCE AT ANY COST. HE WANTS A CONSTITUTION PROMULGATED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND IN A WAY THAT WILL PRECLUDE VIOLENCE. HE IS, BY HIS OWN ADMISSION, AT HIS "WITS END." SANYA THEREFORE IS SUBJECT TO INTIMIDATION BY THOSE WHO THREATEN VIOLENCE OR DISORDER. IN THE CURRENT CRISIS HE OVERESTIMATED THE POWER OF THIRAYUT, THE NSCT AND THE PDG. HIS APPARENT CAPITULATION TO THEIR DEMANDS WAS HIS WAY OF TRYING TO AVOID VIOLENCE EVEN THOUGH IN THE END IT REPRESENTED A SERIOUS CASE OF MISJUDGMENT AND POOR LEADERSHIP.

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D) KHUKRIT PRAMOT'S MOTIVES ARE DIFFICULT TO ASSESS. HE HAS LONG BEEN A SUPPORTER OF THE 18 YEAR OLD VOTING AGE AND SOME OF THE OTHER STUDENT DEMANDS. IT IS POSSIBLE KHUKRIT HAD ONLY INTENDED TO PROTECT HIS FLANK WITH THE STUDENTS BY EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THEIR POSITION AND RECOMMENDING THEY SEE THE KING EVEN THOUGH HE BELIEVED IN THE END THEY WOULD FAIL. IF THIS IS SO HIS ATTEMPT TO CURRY FAVOR WITH THE STUDENTS PROBABLY HAS NOT GONE DOWN WELL WITH OTHER CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS, PARTICULARLY THE THAI MILITARY AND GENERAL KRIT. KHUKRIT HAS LONG ADVOCATED A PEOPLE'S MONARCHY, HOWEVER, AND HE MAY HAVE SEEN THE CURRENT CONFRONTATION AS AN OPPURTUNITY FOR THE PEOPLE TO APPEAL DIRECTLY TO THE KING AND GET RESULTS -- WHICH INDIRECTLY WOULD ALSO HELP KHUKRIT SINCE HE IS IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF THE KING. HIS RECENT PUBLIC DENIALS OF PRESS REPORTS THAT HE HAD MADE A DEAL WITH SANYA, INCLUDING CRITICISM OF SANYA HIMSELF, ARE AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO RESTORE HIS POLITICAL INTEGRITY AND CREDIBILITY WITH CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS.

E) THE NLA'S REJECTION OF STUDENT DEMANDS ON SEPT. 20

WAS LESS A REJECTION OF THE DEMANDS THAN OF THE IDEA THAT THE NLA COULD BE PRESSURED BY MOBS IN THE STREETS. EVEN AMONG THE LIBERAL ELEMENTS THERE IS A BACKLASH AGAINST SUCH OUTSIDE PRESSURE AND CHALLENGES TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE NLA. THE CONFRONTATION HAS NOW BECOME A TEST A WHETHER THE NLA WILL RETAIN ITS INTEGRITY AND WHETHER THE STUDENTS CAN BE FORCED TO "PLAY BY THE RULES". AT THIS WRITING IT APPEARS AS THOUGH THE NLA WILL WIN THE CONFRONTATION. WHETHER THE STUDENTS WILL SUBSEQUENTLY PLAY BY THE RULES DEPENDS ON WHETHER THEY CAN CUT THEMSELVES OFF FROM SOME OF THE MORE IRRESPONSIBLE POLITICAL ACTIVISTS.

F) THE NVSCT'S DECISION TO OPPOSE THE PDG-NSCT LED DEMONSTRATION WAS MOTIVATED IN PART BY LONG STANDING GRIEVANCES AT BEING USED BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES. THEY WERE NOT BROUGHT IN ON THE ADVANCE PLANNING FOR THE CURRENT DEMONSTRATIONS. NOR HAS THE NSCT EVER FULFILLED ITS PROMISES TO SHARE WITH THE NVSCT FUNDS THAT HAVE POURED INTO NSCT COFFERS SINCE OCT. 14, 1973. FINALLY, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, THE NVSCT HAS SEIZED AN OPPURTUNITY TO IMPROVE THE
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IMAGE OF THE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS. ONE MONTH AGO THEY WERE VIEWED BY ALL AS THE MAJOR THREAT TO DEMOCRACY. TODAY THEY APPEAR AS ITS PROTECTORS. THEY ALSO REPRESENT THEMSELVES AS THE DEFENDERS OF THE NLA. THE NVSCT IS NOW IS A POSITION TO ESTABLISH ITSELF AS AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ENTITY.

G) AMONG THE HIDDEN ACTORS, KRIT SIWARA'S MOTIVES ARE LEAST EASILY DISCERNED SIMPLY BECAUSE HE IS DOING VERY LITTLE OPENLY. HE IS CERTAINLY PLEASED BY THE FACT THAT MODERATE STUDENTS HAVE COME OUT AGAINST THOSE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO OPPOSE THE PRESENT DRAFT CONSTITUTION. SEKSAN PRASOETKUN IS A MAJOR QUESTION MARK. SEKSAN AND THIRAYUT HAVE NEVER REALLY HAD MUCH IN COMMON, AND SEKSAN IS ON RECORD AS OPPOSING VIOLENCE. HE BELIEVES MORE IN LONG RANGE ORGANIZATION THAN DEMONSTRATIONS AS A MEANS TO CHANGE SOCIETY. IT IS POSSIBLE SEKSAN AND THERDPHUN WITHDREW THEMSELVES AND THEIR SUPPORTERS FROM THE SCENE BECAUSE THEY SENSED THE COMING CONFRONTATION OF THE NVSCT WITH THE NLA WOULD BE ONE ACTIVISTS WOULD NOT WIN. FINALLY, THE KING HAS NOT MOVED. HE IS NOT PLEASED WITH THE STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND HAS NO REASON TO HELP THEM. FOR HIM THE BEST OUTCOME WOULD BE FOR THE NLA TO PREVAIL AND PASS THE CONSTITUTION SO HE CAN PROMULGATE IT AS THE SUPREME LAW OF THE LAND, THEREBY OBIATING ANY NEED FOR HIS FURTHER ENTRY INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA.

CONCLUSION:

CIVILIAN, DEMOCRATICALLY INCLINED LEADERSHIP IN THAILAND DID NOT PERFORM VERY WELL OVER THE PAST WEEK. AN UNNECESSARY CRISIS WAS CREATED THAT THREATENED BRIEFLY TO SERIOUSLY COMPROMISE THE PROSPECTS FOR STABLE CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT, IF NOT BRING TO AN END THE CURRENT ATTEMPT TO RESTRUCTURE THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND SYSTEM IN THAILAND. IRONICALLY, IT WAS THE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS WHO THROUGH THEIR OWN SHOW OF FORCE AND SUPPORT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY HAVE PRESERVED FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST THAILAND'S FRAGILE ATTEMPT TO BUILD DEMOCRACY. THEIR SHOCK TROOPS BROUGHT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR DEMOCRACY ONE YEAR AGO. IN THE INTERVENING TIME THEIR VIOLENCE AND INTER-SCHOOL RIVALRY HAS CONTRIBUTED TO DISORDER THAT MIGHT WELL HAVE DEGENERATED.

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RATED INTO CHAOS. YET ON 23 SEPT. 1974 THEY THEMSELVES CALLED A HALT TO THE POLITICAL CHAOS BEING CREATED BY POORLY LED UNIVERSITY STUDENT ACTIVISTS AND INDECISIVE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP. THAILAND HAS PASSED THROUGH ONE MORE FIRE STORM IN ITS EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY. THERE UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE MORE. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS EVENT FOLLOW IN A SEPARATE CABLE.

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